

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7411

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 6538

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, TS

SUBJ: PEKING' S POLICY ON THE LIBERATION OF TAIWAN

SUMMARY : THE PRC LINE ON TAIWAN IN THIS KOREAN WAR ANNIVERSARY EDITORIAL IS LESS STRIDENT THAN LAST YEAR' S, PRESUMABLY REFLECTING GENERAL CONFIDENCE IN THE EFFICACY OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. HOWEVER, THE LINE IS THE STERNEST THIS YEAR. PEKING MAY BE TRYING THUS TO DIFFERENTIATE CHINA' S CASE FROM THAT OF KOREA AND OTHER DIVIDED COUNTRIES. ALSO, THIS MESSAGE MAY BE INTENDED IN PART FOR SOVIET EARS. AAS ANOTHER POSSIBLE FACTOR, THE PRC MAY FEEL SOME ANNOYANCE OVER RECURRENT REFERENCES BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS TO TAIWAN AS A " NATION". END SUMMARY

1. A PEOPLE' S DAILY EDITORIAL (NCNA JUNE 25) MARKING THE 23 RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR CONTAINS THE STRONGEST AUTHORITATIVE RESTATEMENT IN SOME TIME OF PEKING' S DETERMINATION TO LIBERATE TAIWAN. THE EDITORIAL REITERATED THAT " THE LIBERATION OF TAIWAN IS CHINA' S INTERNAL AFFAIR WHICH BROOKS NO INTERFERENCE FROM ANYONE."

2. PEKING HAS TRADITIONALLY USED THIS ANNIVERSARY AS AN OCCASION
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TO RESTATE ITS POSITION ON TAIWAN, WHICH WAS " OCCUPIED" IN CONNECTION WITH A WAR OF " US IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION" AGAINST KOREA . WHILE REFERENCES TO US IMPERIALISM IN ANY CONTEXT HAVE BEEN RARE SINCE THE INDOCHINA CEASEFIRE, THE CONTEXT HERE IS CLEARLY HISTORICAL, AND LAST YEAR' S REFERENCES TO " TWO CHINAS" OR " INDEPENDENT TAIWAN" PLOTS ARE MISSING FROM THIS EDITORIAL. THIS YEAR, INSTEAD OF THE CALL FOR WITHDRAWL OF " ALL US ARMED FORCES AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS", THERE IS ONLY A REJECTION OF " ANY FOREIGN INTERFERENCE". THESE CHANGES PRESUMABLY REFLECT AT LEAST SOME CONFIDENCE THAT THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE (ONLY FOUR MONTHS OLD AT THE TIME OF LAST YEAR' S KOREAN ANNIVERSARY) IS SERVING ITS INTENDED PURPOSE.

3. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN THE CURRENT EDITORIAL' S EMPHASIS ON PEACEFUL UNIFICATION OF KOREA, THE PARAGRAPH ON TAIWAN SEEMS UNUSUALLY STERN. THE SPEECHES EARLIER THIS YEAR BY FU TSO- I AND LIAO CHENG- CHIH ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE " FEB 28" TAIWAN UPRISING (HONG KONG 2121) WERE BY COMPARISON MUCH Milder AND STRESSED RECONCILIATION. LIKEWISE, THE SECTION ON TAIWAN IN THE 1973 NEW YEAR' S EDITORIAL WAS MORE PERFUNCTORY.

4. COMMENT: THE APPARENT SLIGHT STIFFENING OF THE LINE ON TAIWAN PRESUMABLY RESULTS FROM A VARIETY OF FACTORS: THE PRC WISH TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN TO KOREA AND THE OTHER DIVIDED COUNTRIES, FORMALIZATION OF THE STATUS QUO IN REGARD TO TAIWAN IS OUT; PRC CONCERN OVER SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT SALLY BY A RUSSIAN FLOTILLA INTO THE TAIWAN STRAIT; AND POSSIBLY SOME ANNOYANCE OVER OCCASIONAL REFERENCES BY AMERICAN SPOKESMEN TO TAIWAN AS A " NATION" (EG IN A JUNE 12 ADDRESS BY COMMERCE SECRETARY DENT).
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